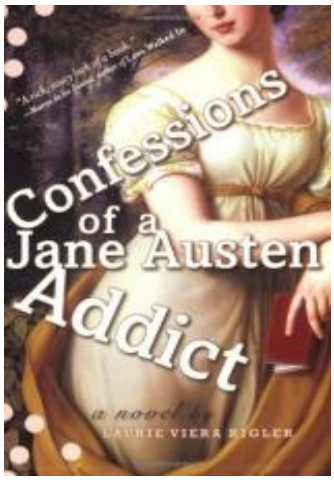
Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict

by Laurie Viera Rigler



About the Book

In this Jane Austen-inspired comedy, love story, and exploration of identity and destiny, a modern LA girl wakes up as an Englishwoman in Austen?s time.

After nursing a broken engagement with Jane Austen novels and Absolut, Courtney Stone wakes up and finds herself not in her Los Angeles bedroom or even in her own body, but inside the bedchamber of a woman in Regency England. Who but an Austen addict like herself could concoct such a fantasy?

Not only is Courtney stuck in another woman?s life, she is forced to pretend she actually is that woman; and despite knowing nothing about her, she manages to fool even the most astute observer. But not even her love of Jane Austen has prepared Courtney for the chamber pots and filthy coaching inns of nineteenth-century England, let alone the realities of being a single woman who must fend off suffocating chaperones, condomless seducers, and marriages of convenience. Enter the enigmatic Mr. Edgeworth, who fills Courtney?s borrowed brain with confusing memories that are clearly not her own.

Try as she might to control her mind and find a way home, Courtney cannot deny that she is becoming this other woman --- and being this other woman is not without its advantages: Especially in a looking-glass Austen world. Especially with a suitor who may not turn out to be a familiar species of philanderer after all.

Discussion Guide

1. Would you have handled things differently if you found yourself in Courtney?s/Jane?s situation? Which things would you have done differently? Which things would you have done the same?

Had you witnessed my behaviour there, I can hardly suppose you would ever have thought well of me again. --- Frank

Churchill, in Jane Austen?s **Emma**

2. How does Courtney/Jane use Jane Austen?s novels as a means of making sense of her world? Have you ever turned to your favorite books or films for inner strength, guidance, or comfort?

?Oh! it is only a novel!? replies the young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. It is . . . in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language. --- Henry Tilney, in Jane Austen?s **Northanger Abbey**

3. How do you interpret the ending of the book?

Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest. --- From **Mansfield Park**

4. Aside from the societal restrictions on a woman?s mobility, career choices, and living arrangements that Courtney/Jane faced in 1813, have parental, peer, and personal attitudes toward unmarried women fundamentally changed since Jane Austen?s day?

Ah! Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower, because I am a married woman. --- Lydia Bennet, in Jane Austen?s **Pride and Prejudice**

5. One of the ways in which Courtney/Jane defines herself is by what she reads. To what extent do we define ourselves by what we read? To what extent do we form our opinions of others based on what they read?

The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid. --- Henry Tilney, in Jane Austen?s **Northanger Abbey**

6. Like Courtney/Jane, have you ever found yourself in a situation where your very concept of who you are was fundamentally challenged?

Till this moment, I never knew myself. --- Elizabeth Bennet, in Jane Austen?s **Pride and Prejudice**.

7. What are the things you think you would enjoy the most about being in Jane Austen?s world? What are the things you might find particularly challenging? Is there anything in the contemporary world that you absolutely could not do without?

One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other. --- Emma Woodhouse, in Jane Austen?s **Emma**

8. If it were possible for you to be someone in Jane Austen?s world, who would you wish to be? Would you prefer a round-trip ticket to that world, or one-way only?

The distance is nothing, when one has a motive? --- Elizabeth Bennet, in Jane Austen?s **Pride and Prejudice**

Author Bio

When not indulging herself in rereadings of Jane Austen?s six novels, Laurie Viera Rigler is a freelance book editor who teaches writing workshops, including classes at Vroman?s, Southern California?s oldest and largest independent bookstore. Laurie lives in Los Angeles and is a member of the Jane Austen Society of North America.

Critical Praise

?A rich, saucy lark of a book for all of us who have ever looked at our lives and marveled, 'How did I get here?'?

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